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02 November 2000
File: 13537013

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Alberta Capital Region Governance Review
1250, 10055 – 106 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 2Y2

Attention: **Lou Hyndman**
Project Chair

Dear Sir:

Reference: **Alberta Capital Region**
Long-Term Transportation Plan

As you are aware, the Alberta Capital Region Alliance's Transportation Working Group has incrementally been developing a long-term transportation plan for the region over the last two years. Please find attached a brief summary report highlighting the work completed to date by the group.

While long-term plans are constantly in evolution and never complete, we have identified three areas where we believe additional work is required. These areas are also summarized in the attached summary report. In our opinion, completing this work will allow the current plan to provide the appropriate guidance required to meet the transportation goal and principles already adopted by the Alberta Capital Region Alliance.

We thank you for the opportunity to have participated in this review. If you should have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

STANTEC CONSULTING LTD.

Carl Clayton, P.Eng. P.E.
Principal, Transportation

Attachment

c. Bob Horton, Chair, Transportation Working Group

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Alberta Capital Region Alliance (ACRA) has a Transportation Working Group comprised of representatives from each of the 22 member municipalities. In 1999 the Transportation Working Group developed a set of criteria to prioritize transportation projects desired over the next 5 years. Using these criteria, nearly 100 projects were prioritized. The results of the prioritization were provided to Alberta Infrastructure, who used them as input in the development of their 3 Year Construction Program.

As a follow-up to the work done in 1999, the Transportation Working Group revisited their project priorities in 2000. As part of this process, they also established a goal and supporting principles for ACRA with respect to transportation so that a long-term transportation plan, as opposed to short-term priorities, could be developed.

2.0 GOAL AND SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

The recommended goal, with respect to transportation, for ACRA is as follows:

Development and maintenance of an integrated transportation system that facilitates the safe, effective and efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Alberta Capital Region.

To attain the recommended goal, 5 principles were established to guide planning of the desired regional transportation system. The recommended principles are as follows:

1. *Develop and maintain a Ring Road system as follows:*
   a) *A high standard Regional Ring Road with interchanges at major intersections and appropriate access management*
   b) *A free-flow Anthony Henday Drive with appropriate access management*
   c) *A high standard Inner Ring Road with appropriate access management*

2. *Develop and maintain a system of high standard roadways with appropriate access management connecting the Ring Road system with the Provincial and National Highway System.*

3. *Develop and maintain a roadway system with appropriate levels of access management that provides a high standard of accessibility to key air and rail facilities, such as the Edmonton International Airport and rail intermodal facilities, and key regional transit facilities.*

4. *Develop and maintain a roadway system with appropriate levels of access management that provides a high standard of accessibility to major industrial areas within the region.*

5. *Develop and maintain public transit services that can cost effectively provide regional accessibility for those who rely on public transit and more effectively utilize the existing roadway system and increase the capacity of the transportation system.*

3.0 RECOMMENDED LONG-TERM REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Based on the recommended goal and principles for the regional transportation system, the key components of the regional road network were identified and are illustrated on page 1.4.

4.0 RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTION

While work done by the Transportation Working Group over the last two years has identified a goal, principles, criteria and a long-term (20+ years) regional plan with respect to transportation, the primary focus of their efforts have been on prioritizing short-term needs. It is also recognized that, while public transit and goods movement are part of the criteria used by the Transportation Working Group, the primary focus has been on the movement of commuters along high volume roadways. Development of a viable long-term regional transportation system consistent with the growth vision and regional competitiveness strategy being proposed will require further effort. Three key areas where additional effort is required are summarized as follows:

Transit

One area where the current transportation plan is lacking, is in the development of a long-term vision for transit. This vision needs to identify major public transit corridors that, while recognizing that public transit best serves higher density areas, will also serve regional needs. To this end, ACRA's board has already directed "That ACRA investigate the operational/capital costs and opportunities of a regional transit system and also investigate the longer term needs of regional LRT/High Speed Transit." This initiative needs to be supported.

In addition to identifying regional transit corridors, a practical approach on how to serve these corridors needs to be developed. Current approaches include the use of light rail transit and park n ride sites. However, busways and high occupancy vehicle lanes may in some cases be more effective and cost efficient. A range of approaches should be investigated to determine their applicability.

Beyond servicing the higher density areas, typically within the City of Edmonton, further work on identifying the potential for various forms of public transit for smaller communities needs to be done. A study is currently being conducted on handi-bus service in Edmonton, St. Albert and Strathcona County.

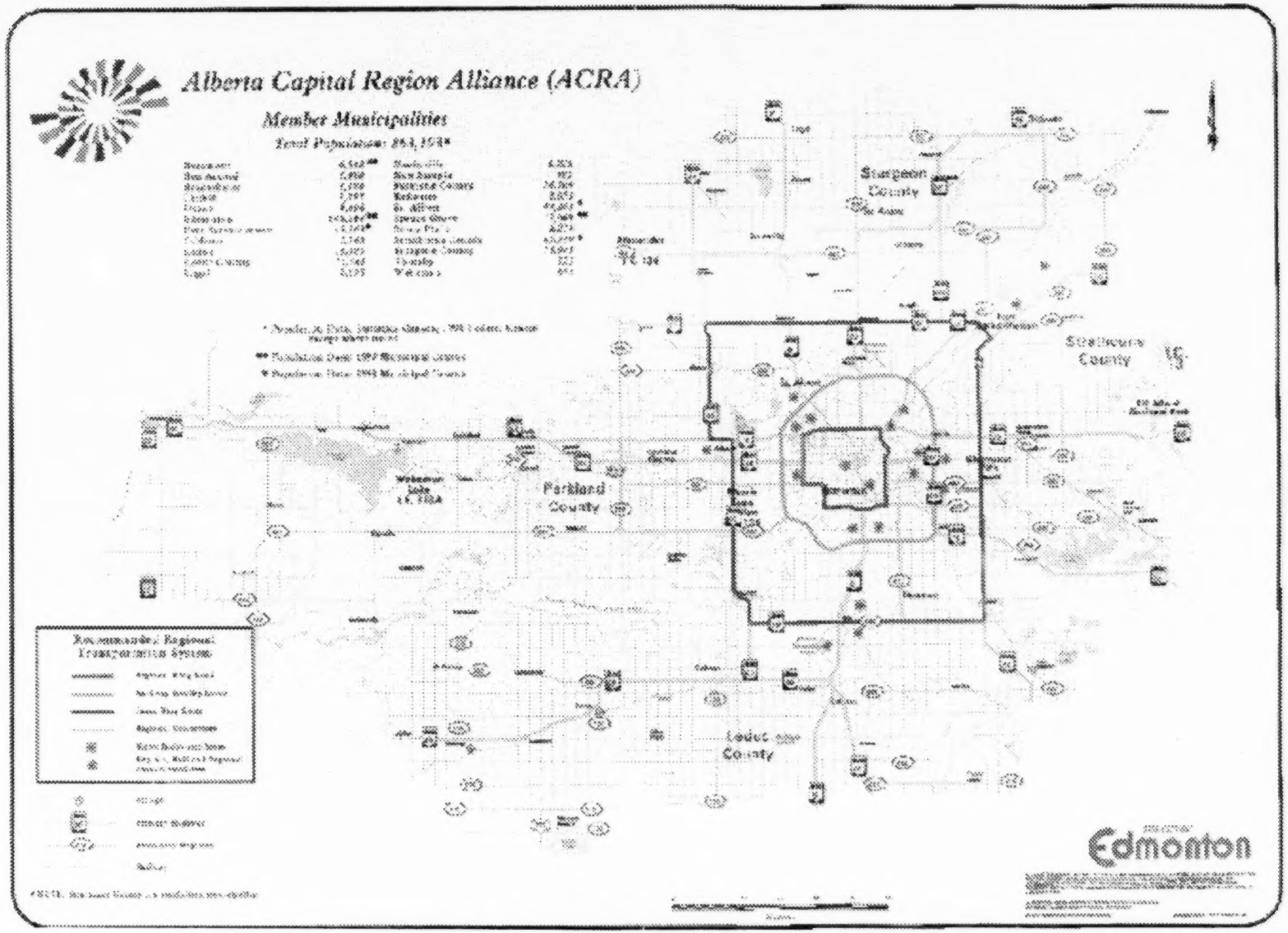
However, establishing criteria to decide on when the smaller communities warrant transit service in general and then being able to provide a range of options that can be modified to the specific needs and budgets of these communities is considered important in meeting the need to provide regional accessibility for residents who must rely on public transit.

Goods Movement

As part of the regional competitiveness strategy, acting as a transportation node was identified as an important component of the strategy. While the goals of the current long-range transportation plan recognize the importance of goods transportation, the current plan has not addressed this issue explicitly. In particular, there is no solid understanding of existing or future goods movement patterns. Accordingly, there is only limited agreement on which connections to the Province's North South Trade Corridor and other key provincial trade routes need to be strengthened as well as how links to intermodal facilities, such as the International Airport and railway intermodal yards, could be improved. A Goods Movement Study and subsequent review of the transportation network required to cost effectively accommodate key goods movement is considered desirable.

Corridor Coordination

Most of the radial corridors in the transportation system typically cross a number of municipal jurisdictions. To encourage inter-municipal dialogue and cooperation, subcommittees of the Transportation Working Group containing affected member municipalities should be established for each of the key corridors. Meeting on a regular, perhaps annual, basis these subcommittees would focus on corridor related issues in which they have a common interest. These issues could include coordination of construction activities, development of consistent traffic signal timing programs to reduce delays to traffic and maintaining a consistent approach to transportation planning along the corridor.


Alberta Capital Region Alliance (ACRA)
Member Municipalities
Total Population: 863,358*
Sturgeon County
Strathcona County
Parkland County
Leduc County
Edmonton